

	National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior	Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks	40001 State Road 9336 Homestead, Florida 33034 305-242-7700 phone 305-242-7711 fax

Everglades and Dry Tortugas News Release - UPDATE

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Date: December 5, 2014

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**UPDATE - PLEASE NOTE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC MEETING
DATE FOR DECEMBER 11 IN Key West**

Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks Seeking Input on Proposed Park Fee Increases

Miami/Homestead: In September 2014, the National Park Service authorized all park units to engage the public and stakeholders on proposed fee increases as part of the 2014 National Park Service fee review. A large portion (80 percent) of national park entrance and other user fees are returned directly to the parks where they are collected. The fees provide direct benefits to park visitors such as improving the condition of facilities, natural and cultural resource preservation, and interpretation of the park's resources.

Over the past few months park managers analyzed entrance fees across similar units of the National Park System, especially parks of similar size and visitation, as well as conducted comparisons with state and local park facilities with similar services. The proposed fee increases will bring Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks in much better alignment with fees charged at similar national park areas as well as similar services provided at state and local park facilities.

Unlike other similar national parks across the country, Everglades has not raised its fees parkwide during regular fee reviews conducted in 2007 and 2013. Everglades has not had a fee increase since 1997. Due to years of static fees and reduced operating budgets Everglades has a significant backlog of maintenance needs on all park infrastructure. In addition to general wear and tear, Everglades received significant impacts from the hurricanes of 2005 that added to this maintenance and repair backlog.

In order to bring the park into a more comparative position for similar service, fee increases are being proposed for a number of fee areas including: park entrance, annual pass and camping. A new boating permit linked with an online boating education system will replace current boat ramp permits and canoe permits will be eliminated.

Several public meetings are scheduled before the end of the year as well as opportunities to comment by email or mail. Public input will help the park develop a plan on whether to implement a single or multi-phase approach in implementing increases.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>
December 9, 2014	TUESDAY	Homestead Agriculture Center 187 10 SW 288th Street, Homestead, FL	6:30 -8:30 p.m.
(NEW) December 11, 2014	THURSDAY	Eco Discovery Center 35 East Quay Road, FI 33040	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
December 15, 2014	MONDAY	Key Largo Library 101485 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

"We invite everyone to comment on these proposed entrance fee increases" stated acting Superintendent Bob Krumenaker. "Public participation is vital to the NPS planning and decision making processes".

Following the comment period, a recommendation on fee increases will be developed and submitted to the National Park Service Washington D.C. office for final review and action.

Written comments may be mailed to: Proposed Fee Increase, Superintendent, Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks, 40001 State Road 9336, Homestead, FL 33034-6733. Comments may also be emailed to: Debbie_Lane@nps.gov. Comments must be received by close of business January 15, 2015.

Two public meetings have also been scheduled to provide the public the opportunity to discuss these proposed fees. An additional meeting will be added to the schedule for Key West.

The proposed fee increases are as follows:

Type of Recreation Fee	Current	Proposed
Vehicle Entrance	\$10 (7 day permit)	\$25 (7 day permit)
Pedestrian/Cyclist	\$5 (7 day permit)	\$8 (7 day permit)
Motorcycle	\$5 (7 day permit)	\$20 (7 day permit)
Annual Pass	\$25	\$50
RV w/Hookups/Senior	\$30/\$15	No Change
Front Country- Camping	\$16	\$20
Back Country Camping	\$10	\$15
*Annual Boat Ramp	\$60	Replaced w/ Boat Permit
Boating Permit 7-day	Not in place	\$25

Boating Permit Annual	Not in place	(\$50-100)
Canoe Permit/Senior	\$3/\$1.5	Eliminate
Dry Tortugas Entrance Fee	\$5	\$10
Dry Tortugas Camping	\$3	\$10
Biscayne Camping (Boca Chita & Elliott Key)	\$20	\$24

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